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ARTICLES:

- (1) Ozawa makes Obama meeting condition for U.S. visit

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 9, 2010

Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa, at a press conference on Feb. 8, disclosed, with regard to a contemplated delegation of DPJ lawmakers to the U.S. over the long holiday beginning in late April, that he had told the U.S. government: "Since I would be making the trip, it would not do if President Obama didn't set aside a reasonable amount of time to see me." It is

highly unusual for an executive of a ruling party to request an interview with the President as a condition for visiting the U.S.

Assistant Secretary of State Campbell (East Asian and Pacific Affairs) asked Ozawa at a meeting in February to send a delegation of DPJ lawmakers to the U.S. At the meeting Ozawa reportedly mentioned his having been greeted by President Hu Jintao during a DPJ lawmaker delegation's visit to China late last year and asked for a meeting with President Obama.

Following his meeting with the top Chinese leader, Ozawa appears to want to hold talks with the American president to demonstrate his important role in relations with the U.S. and dispel criticism of him inside and outside the DPJ.

(2) Japan must expedite process of acceding to convention on child abduction

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 9, 2010

Disputes over child custody can occur after international marriages end in divorce. The Hague convention exists to deal with such situations. At present, 81 countries are signatories to the convention. Japan, the only country among the Group of Seven industrialized countries that is not a signatory, needs to expedite the process of acceding to the convention.

The convention is officially called the Hague Convention on the

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Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. If a child under the age of 16 is illegally removed from the country of his or her habitual residence, the convention requires that the country to which the child is taken to return the child to the country of his or her habitual residence.

For instance, if a child living in the United States with his or her Japanese mother and American father is taken to Japan by his or her mother without the consent of the other parent, the Japanese government will be required to send the child back to the United States.

Japan has over 40,000 international marriages every year, and disputes involving international parental child abduction are on the rise.

Broken down by country, Japan has some 70 cases of parental child abduction involving the U.S. and 30 cases each involving the U.K., France, and Canada. Conversely, there are apparently over 30 cases in which a child has been taken away from Japan by a foreign parent.

Because Japan is not a signatory to the convention, the country cannot deal effectively with disputes. Parents are unable to see their children. The act of removing a child is considered abduction, which is a crime, in the U.S. and European countries.

Differences in culture, including legal systems, are often cited as reasons why Japan has not acceded to the convention. To be sure, there is a difference between Japan, where sole custody is granted to one parent after divorce, and the U.S. and European countries, where joint custody is the norm. Nevertheless, it makes sense to apply the generally accepted rules to disputes involving international marriage.

The convention is based on the idea that a dispute over a child must be settled in the countries of his/her habitual residence without regarding the parent who has taken the child away as a victor. This idea sounds logical enough.

Some people have pointed out that a large portion of the Japanese nationals who have returned home were women who were fleeing domestic violence. However, the convention has a special exemption stipulating that a child should not be returned if doing so would

expose him/her to a serious threat.

In the face of growing pressure from the U.S., the U.K., France, and other countries, the Foreign Ministry set up a parental child abduction office late last year and has begun studying the conditions for acceding to the convention together with relevant government agencies, such as the Justice Ministry. To accede to the convention, laws and organizations must be reviewed, which will take time. The government must expedite its preparations.

(3) Okinawa in turmoil; Nago's anti-base administration gets off to start; Okinawa a base for anti-U.S. struggle

SANKEI (Top play and page 2) (Abridged slightly)
February 7, 2010

Masashi Miyamoto

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Susumu Inamine, who is opposed to the plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago's Henoko district, has been elected as the mayor of Nago. Inamine's "anti-base administration" will officially get off to a start on Feb. 8. His election has energized the local newspapers that are calling for relocation outside Okinawa or even outside Japan, who already have the wind at their back thanks to Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's statement expressing his intention to respect the results of the election as a manifestation of the popular will. At the same time, there is concern that the Inamine administration might become an extreme left-wing administration.

During the election campaign, the Democratic Party of Japan, the Social Democratic Party, the People's New Party, and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), all of which supported Inamine, maintained that even if the city would not offer a replacement site, the city can receive an economic package as long as there are communication channels to the government. This approach succeeded in rekindling the anti-U.S. sentiments Nago's citizens harbor deep down inside.

Anti-U.S. groups inside and outside Okinawa seem to have capitalized on this strategy as well.

An informed source following U.S. base issues took this view on the results of the Nago mayoral election: "For anti-U.S. forces, Okinawa is a great base for conducting activities. The fact that the group opposing the relocation of Futenma to Henoko includes many people from outside Okinawa symbolizes that."

The source also said: "The election became a huge chance for the anti-U.S. group. The people in Okinawa have accepted the bases for economic reasons, and the anti-U.S. group tactfully manipulated their sentiments. The group successfully inspired dreams among voters, drawing their attention away from the city's dependence on the bases for its economy." At the same time, a real estate agent in Naha indicated that some anti-base citizens have purchased land for lease to the U.S. military to secure a steady income after retirement. So whether the election results really reflect the popular will is questionable.

"The anti-base group includes many individuals who have been brainwashed by activists inside and outside Okinawa -- activists engaged in an ideological struggle," the same source noted.

In the mayoral election, a JCP-affiliated civic group had initially considered fielding its own candidate, but it later decided to jointly back Inamine. "In the election, the JCP's support was strong. The JCP will have a louder voice in the new city administration," a former city council member predicted.

"There is a strong possibility that during campaigning, the anti-U.S. group took advantage of the distracted state of mind of citizens who are suffering from the recession," the ex-city council member said angrily. "I am worried that Nago might have an ultra-left administration. The Hatoyama administration used the base issue and toyed with the sentiments of Okinawans for the sake of

change of government. The coalition government has committed a crime that is unpardonable."

"The U.S. base issue in Okinawa cannot be discussed in a brief space of time because five points -- economic dependence on the bases, the perception of history, the anti-U.S. struggle, national defense, and

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the view of the state - are complicatedly intertwined with it," Okinawa Prefectural Museum Director Hirotaka Makino said.

Priority has been given to the superficial sentiments of the Okinawans with respect to the Futenma issue, and there is no sign that the five points have been discussed.

Since Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, the government has provided financial aid to 25 municipalities hosting U.S. bases in Okinawa. In fiscal 2007, the government paid 161.961 billion yen for a project to improve the surroundings of U.S. bases.

Nago, which hosts Camp Schwab, also received 120 million yen in expenses for improving areas close to the base and 640 million yen in subsidies to improve areas surrounding the defense facilities in fiscal 2006. In addition, the government has paid some 280 million yen in base subsidies to Nago annually. In a ten-year period, the government extended a total of 77.5 billion yen in a local economic stimulus package to Nago in return for accepting the Futenma relocation plan.

Separate from this, municipalities and some 39,000 land owners who are providing their land to the U.S. military can receive rents from the government annually. Rent totaled 77.7 billion yen in 2006, 80 billion yen in 2008, and 90 billion yen in 2009.

Money spent by U.S. military personnel, civilian employees, and their families, plus Japanese (some 9,000) working at the U.S. bases in Okinawa came to 215.5 billion yen in fiscal 2006. The figure is large even in comparison with Okinawa's tourist industry, which earns some 400 billion yen annually and public works projects, which total 220 billion yen per annum.

Owners of land leased to the military and municipalities benefitting from U.S. bases do not express what they really think. At the same time, they have harbored anti-base sentiments since Okinawa was returned to Japan along with a strong sense in the back of their minds of being victimized by the bases.

"I have swallowed my anti-base sentiment in return for aid for accepting the base," said a 70-year-old man, who is providing his land to Futenma Air Station. "To me, the base has been something that will bring economic benefits; I haven't expected anything else from it."

It is difficult to grasp the true level of anti-base sentiments of the people of Okinawa. It can be said that the Hatoyama administration is turning a deaf ear to the "invisible popular will" on the Futenma issue that has a significant impact on the overall security of Japan.

(4) Commentary: New vision for Japan-U.S. alliance on its 50th anniversary -- Thoughts on the Prime Minister's theory of stationing U.S. troops only in a contingency

MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)
February 9, 2010

Tomoko Onuki, political reporter

The revised Japan-U.S. security treaty has marked its 50th anniversary since it was signed on Jan. 19, 1960, and embarked on a new course. The Japanese and U.S. governments have started talks to

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deepen the Japan-U.S. alliance on the assumption of upholding it. I also believe that maintaining the alliance is best for Japan's

national interest under the present circumstances, but I would like to raise a new issue. I think Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's ideal of an East Asian Community and the theory of stationing U.S. troops only in a contingency that follows from there are worthy of examination.

On the occasion of the 50th year of the alliance, I interviewed officials of the Prime Minister's Official Residence involved with foreign policy, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and experts knowledgeable about Japan-U.S. relations. What I found out is that while the focus of the alliance has shifted from "Japan's defense" to "peace and prosperity in Asia" in its course of evolution, Japan finds itself being torn between the "ideal" of pursuing equality while leaving the foundation of its security in the hands of the U.S. and "reality."

The old security treaty signed in 1951 reflected Japan's choice of light armament and giving priority to economic reconstruction. In light of the strong reaction to this "Yoshida Doctrine" of (then) Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida and the rising clamor for equality, the Nobusuke Kishi cabinet achieved the revision of this treaty. The framework under which Japan is protected by the U.S. but has no obligation to defend the U.S. while it also aspires for equality has remained unchanged for half a century.

A former administrative vice minister of foreign affairs looks back on the past and states as if in self-reproach: "I think from the U.S.'s standpoint, demanding an equal relationship means taking up equal responsibilities, while from Japan's standpoint, this means saying what needs to be said."

The basic thinking behind the "equal Japan-U.S. relationship" advocated by the Hatoyama administration is similar to the aspiration at the time of the security treaty revision in 1960. This has the danger of unwittingly provoking a rise in nationalism, while the pursuit of equality with a country that is a superpower militarily, economically, culturally, and in all other aspects is unrealistic.

However, the Prime Minister's pet concept of an East Asian Community has the potential of taking the first step away from the past framework of the alliance. When Hatoyama was in opposition, he used to argue that in the future, the East Asian Community could replace some collective security functions of the Japan-US. alliance and with the relaxation of regional tension, the gradual withdrawal of U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) would be possible.

MOFA officials are skeptical about this theory of the Prime Minister's. A senior official in charge of security policy voices the following criticism: "My answer is that without the Japan-U.S. alliance, the next thing you know is that Chinese armed forces will be entering Japanese territorial waters both from the sea and the air." Another senior official responsible for Asian affairs says unequivocally: "Stabilizing Asia through an East Asian Community and eliminating the Japan-U.S. alliance as an absolute given is not an option for Japan's foreign policy." In light of the elements of uncertainty remaining in Asia, such as China's military expansion and the North Korean situation, it is indeed unrealistic for the USFJ to withdraw at this point.

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However, Hatoyama has not forgotten the attempt at historical reconciliation with Asian countries, which is indispensable for promoting the concept of an East Asian Community. He is commendable on this point. Asian countries are still wary of a Japanese military buildup, and they, in a way, desire the stationing of the USFJ. If Japan is prepared to lead in building peace in Asia, it is not a bad idea to pursue its ideals.

The issue of the relocation of the USFJ's Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) is a sticking point in the talks on the deepening of the alliance. For now, the talks are limited to a "plan B" pertaining to cooperation at the working level. Prospects for implementing "plan A" regarding the vision of the alliance in the future remains unclear at this point.

However, this is a rare opportunity for a basic examination of what the alliance stands for. I would like to propose that the Prime Minister's theory be regarded as a "plan C" to be discussed together with plans A and B in an effort to look at all possibilities. What are the requirements for creating a collective security framework with countries with different political regimes like China? What is the difference between Hatoyama's East Asian Community and the European Union (EU)? Will the deterrence of the USFJ still be necessary in 50 years?

Not a few experts and Democratic Party of Japan members share the Prime Minister's thinking. If after a thorough debate, the conclusion turns out to be that the current Japan-U.S. alliance should be maintained, the need for the alliance will be much more persuasive. Prime Minister Yoshida reportedly asked MOFA and a number of experts to look into several proposals, including the stationing of U.S. troops and unarmed neutrality, at the time the old security treaty was signed.

At the same time, the government should provide materials for all citizens to make their judgment on the alliance. This administration, which takes a positive attitude on information disclosure, can possibly disclose the minutes of consultations between Japan and the U.S. in the past 50 years, for example. After the anti-security treaty protests of 1960, the debate on security has taken place only among a handful of concerned people. However, the main purpose of the alliance is to protect the people's peace and security. Unless there is broad support at the grassroots level, what's the point of security policy?

(5) Will Ozawa's leadership be undermined? Part 1: Rebellion in DPJ lasted only four days

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Almost full)
February 5, 2010

With public prosecutors dropping the case against Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ozawa over his Rikuzan-kai fund management body violating the Political Funds Control Law in its land purchase, the government administration led by Ozawa has been set to continue. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, who leaves party affairs to Ozawa to deal with, has managed to avert the biggest crisis since the launch of the administration for the time being. However, with the Upper House election close at hand in the summer, calls for Ozawa to take political and supervisory responsibilities are still lingering. Developments in the party, Diet debate, and public opinion will determine the future of the Ozawa leadership.

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The rebellion against the Ozawa leadership ended in four days. On Feb. 4, Transport Minister Seiji Maehara, Deputy Vice Finance Minister Yoshihiko Noda, and Yukio Edano either began defending Ozawa or keeping quiet about him, although it was only four days prior that they had referred to Ozawa's accountability.

Statements by Maehara, Noda, and Edano

Edano, who had urged Ozawa to take responsibility, kept silent when he met with State Minister for Government Revitalization and Civil Service Reform Yoshito Sengoku. Maehara, who had said, "When a new phase emerges, we must take strict remedial action," refrained from making an official statement. Voices calling for Ozawa's resignation have thus disappeared in four days.

The "seven magistrates," as dubbed by Vice Speaker of the Lower House Kozo Watanabe, are all distancing themselves from Ozawa. Moves to file requests to the Ozawa leadership got under way at a traditional Japanese restaurant in Akasaka on Jan. 16.

Opinions such as "Prevent the prime minister from being made to share the fate of Mr. Ozawa" or "(The administration) will not hold up if the situation is left as is" were voiced at a meeting hosted by Watanabe. In terms of the timing for taking action, they were thinking about right before the deadline for the detention of Lower

House member and secretary to Ozawa Tomohiro Ishikawa on Feb. 4.

Trend changes completely

The trend changed on the 3rd, when it became likely that public prosecutors would drop the case against Ozawa. Maehara immediately switched to supporting Ozawa's remaining in office. Noda at a meeting of the group of his supporters held at a Japanese-style pub said, "It is not good for the party to become disintegrated. It is important for us to remain unified." Members of a group supporting Ozawa said that the pattern this time is just the same as the false e-mail incident, in which Mr. Maehara lost perspective.

On the 4th, members of the Isshin-kai group, which supports Ozawa, enthusiastically said at their regular meeting that they wanted the secretary general to stick it out. Although the DPJ is critical of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), power struggles within the LDP served to "put a proper end" to problems that occurred during an era when party factions were active.

Dependence on public opinion

Koichiro Genba, one of the "seven magistrates," pointed out, "It was good that Mr. Ozawa was not indicted. The problem is whether the public will understand the situation better as a result." The anti-Ozawa force, which is reluctant to pursue intra-party debate, is depending on public opinion. A first-term lawmaker said on condition of anonymity: "When I make speeches in front of stations, I am often asked why I remain silent (about the matter). Public opinion is harsh."

What kind of impact will the incident have on the upcoming Upper House election and public support ratings for the cabinet? Watanabe, the godfather of the "seven magistrates," said, "We must nail down public opinion."

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(6) Will Ozawa leadership be undermined? part-2: Upper House and labor unions support Ozawa

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 6, 2010

Public prosecutors on Feb. 5 dropped a case against Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa over his fund management body "Rikuzan-kai's" alleged violation of the Political Fund Control Law. Ozawa arrived at his office at the party headquarters shortly after 10:00 a.m. on the following day. Among party executives, Azuma Koshiishi, president of the Upper House, was the first to meet him after the public prosecutors' decision not to prosecute him.

Koshiishi stood firm in supporting Ozawa all the way

When Koshiishi visited his office, Ozawa was already at clerical work for the upcoming Upper House election. Their meeting lasted for only five minutes. Koshiishi told the press corps, "We didn't discuss anything in particular." However, the fact that Ozawa first met Koshiishi after he was exempted from prosecution. This tells of the position of the Upper House and trade unions under the Ozawa leadership.

When it became certain that Ozawa would be exempted from prosecution, Koshiishi told persons around him, "I have defended Mr. Ozawa all the way." At a party convention held right after Lower House member Tomohiro Ishikawa was arrested, Ozawa even presented a plan to temporarily delegate party affairs to Koshiishi to handle so that he could devote himself to dealing with public prosecutors. Koshiishi, who was already serving as his deputy at the time, struggled to pave the way for Ozawa to remain in office, noting, "Mr. Ozawa does not need to quit. If I were asked my opinion, I would like to ask why it is necessary for him to step down."

Yoshimitsu Takashima, secretary general of DPJ members in the House of Councillors, who supports Koshiishi, the deputy for the DPJ

secretary general, planned a meeting of executives of the ruling parties, involving the Social Democratic Party and the People's New Party. Koshiishi gave a toast at the meeting held on the evening of Jan. 28 at a traditional Japanese restaurant in Akasaka, joined by Ozawa as well. During the meeting he criticized the public prosecutors.

Koshiishi, a former member of the Japan Teachers Union, and Takashima, a former member of the All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union, took charge of the secretary general's office and the party leadership during Ozawa's absence. As a measure against public prosecutors' investigation, they repeatedly made positive statements regarding the idea of submitting a bill for introducing legislation designed to enable the taping and recording of the entire questioning process. They stood firm, even when their statements were criticized as pressure on public prosecutors.

They fully supported Ozawa. So much so that a senior ruling party member was impressed and said, "(The) Upper House (members are) amazing. Usually, one is afraid of falling victim (to a scandal)." Learning lessons from his own experience of having made a mistake by slighting the Upper House at a time when the LDP Takeshita faction split, for instance, Ozawa formed deep ties with the Upper House. The full support extended to him by the Upper House this time is the

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result of such an experience of Ozawa.

Fielding candidates making little progress

"If many candidates run in the upcoming election in Tottori Prefecture, its strength will be diversified. Please lend us a hand for the sake of Japan." The first work Ozawa performed on the 5th was to ask Upper House member Kotaro Tamura, who had just left the LDP, to join the DPJ.

If Tamura join's the DPJ floor group, its seats in the Upper House will reach 121 (excluding Speaker Satsuki Eda), and it will become the majority without the SDP. The request to Tamura to join the DPJ means that the Upper House is the linchpin of the Ozawa leadership.

While Ozawa was being involved in the incident, the selection of candidates for the Upper House election made little headway. The Upper House election has been vulnerable to the impact of trends since 1989, when the LDP lost its majority for the first time. The situation changes quickly.

Commenting on the critics of public prosecutors or full support to Ozawa by Upper House members of the DPJ, a senior official of the LDP, which has long been in power, said, "Since the DPJ had long been an opposition party, they do not know how formidable power really is." The power base of the Ozawa leadership, which the Upper House and the trade unions support, will be tested in the upcoming summer election.

(7) Canadian Finance Minister, G7 chair, says G7 agreed to become informal framework

ASAHI (Page 13) (Full)
February 9, 2010

Toshihiko Ogata in Ottawa

Canadian Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, who chaired the G7 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors in Iqaluit, Canada, gave an exclusive interview to Asahi Shimbun on the evening of Feb. 17. Flaherty said that the G7 representatives "agreed unanimously" to make the G7 an informal framework. He also indicated that the U.S. government's new regulations to tighten control on banks are the U.S.'s own policies, and it is not necessary for the other G7 nations to follow suit.

Flaherty gave the interview at the Ottawa airport. Regarding turning the G7 into an informal framework, he said: "It is important not to issue a joint statement. The ministers will be able to express their candid opinions freely. This is an important change for the future

(of the G7)."

Regarding financial regulation, Flaherty explained: "We basically agreed on the principle that the banking institutions which brought about the financial crisis should shoulder the cost (for their bailout) based on their liability, and this should not be borne by the taxpayers. That is our basic thinking." He added: "Each country should also choose what else they want to do. The UK, the U.S., Germany, and France each have their own ideas," thus stating that the G7 nations should take additional measures. He also indicated that the U.S.'s plan to impose stricter regulations to raise the barrier between banking and securities operations is the U.S.'s

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additional measure.

With regard to the appreciation of the Chinese yuan and China's economic and monetary policies, Flaherty said: "There was discussion on the disequilibrium in the world economy, and one of the main concerns is the disequilibrium in the national currencies. While this was discussed at the G7 meeting, the main debate should take place at the G20, which is participated in by other countries."

(8) Cabinet adopts bill to promote policymaking led by politicians

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
February 6, 2010

The Hatoyama cabinet adopted on Feb. 5 a bill to set up a politician-led decision-making system aimed at policymaking led by the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) and strengthening the Kantei's coordination function. The bill was submitted to the Diet on the same day. The main points of the bill are the establishment of a National Strategy Bureau, which would decide on the outlines for mid- and long-term growth strategies in addition to tax and fiscal policies, as well as appointing five people from the private sector as new special advisers to the prime minister. The government intends to pass the bill through the Diet by the end of March and shift to the new system in April.

Under the legislation, the number of deputy chief cabinet secretaries (the same rank as senior vice ministers), currently three, would be increased by one, and the new deputy chief cabinet secretary would be appointed as chief of the National Strategy Bureau. Also, a new post of national strategy officer (the same rank as parliamentary secretary) to support the National Strategy Bureau chief would be established. The national strategy officer would be in charge of drafting and coordinating the basic policies for economic growth strategies and tax and fiscal management, as well as the basic policy for budget compilation.

The government intends to increase the number of special advisers to the prime minister from the current five to ten. The additional five special advisers would be appointed from the private sector. It also intends to give legal authority to the Government Revitalization Unit, which was set up last September and conducted budget screening.

In its manifesto (campaign pledges) for the House of Representatives election last year, the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) pledged to establish a National Strategy Bureau. Soon after it took over the reins of government, the DPJ-led government launched the National Policy Unit as the predecessor of the National Strategy Bureau. However, the presence of the National Policy Unit has been weak because its authority is unclear.

Referring to the National Strategy Bureau, Yoshito Sengoku, state minister for national strategy, stressed at a press conference after the cabinet meeting on Feb. 5: "Under the Kantei's initiative, we will (coordinate) discussions among the government offices." Sengoku indicated in his remarks that the National Strategy Bureau will assume the role of coordinating such significant issues as the creation of a taxpayer identification number system and pension reform.

ROOS